

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

8TH APRIL 2008, FRONTIER CENTRE, IRTHLINGBOROUGH

This workshop will involve stakeholders discussing and informing the content of the strategy. The strategy is focused on **objectives, projects and proposals for environmental, public access, leisure and tourism initiatives in the Nene Valley**. Example projects and investments could include recreational trails, visitor attractions, new eateries, waterside developments, land management and carbon sequestration.

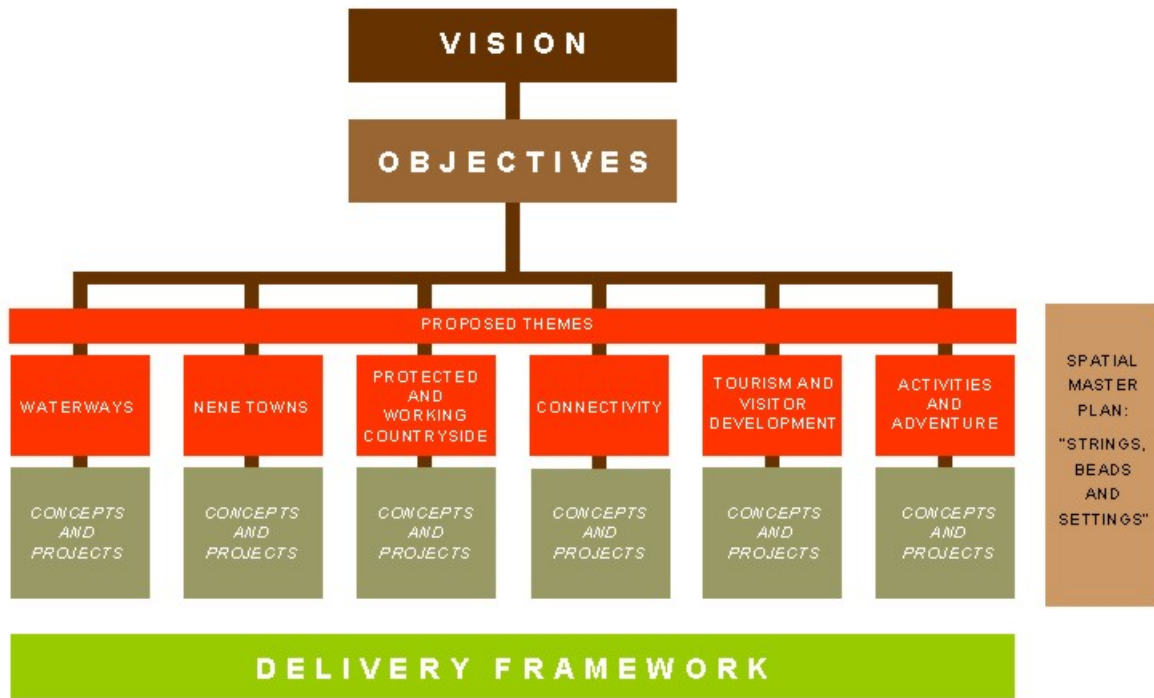
The workshop will build on the findings of the Stakeholder Workshops held in November 2007. These explored issues, proposals and opportunities to be considered in the strategy. It will also build on the extensive green infrastructure work, previously conducted by RNRP, and the work underway to better understand the implications of the proposed Special Protection Area (pSPA) in the Nene Valley. This is an EU environmental designation, and part of the Natura 2000 network. The pSPA is largely consistent with the existing SSSI but offers a much stronger level of legal protection.

AGENDA

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| 8.45am | Registration |
| 9.15am | Nene Valley Strategy Introduction |
| 9.25am | Introduction to Workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vision• Objectives• Geographical priorities• Themes and Projects |
| 9.50am | Part 1 Discussion Groups: Themes and Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waterways• Tourism, Visitor Development and Recreation/ Adventure• Towns, Protected and Working Landscape and Connectivity |
| 10.40am | Coffee and Pastries |
| 11.00am | Report back from Discussion Groups |
| 11.30am | SPA presentation |
| 11.45am | Vision, Objectives and Geographical Priorities Recap |
| 11.55am | Short Comfort Break |
| 12.05pm | Part 2 Discussion Groups: Vision, Objectives and Geographic Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vision• Objectives• Geographic Priorities |
| 12.45pm | Lunch |
| 1.30pm | Report back |
| 2.10pm | Round Up and Close |

WORKSHOP FOCUS

The proposed broad structure for the strategy is shown in the diagram below.



The main themes are currently proposed as follows:

- Waterways
- Nene Towns
- Protected and Working Countryside
- Connectivity
- Tourism and Visitor Development
- Activities and Adventure

There will be overlap between the themes and it may be that these change during the course of strategy development. Key points and questions for discussion are set out below.

WATERWAYS

- What should be the vision for Nene waterways development over the next 5-20 years?
- What should be the main objective(s) for Nene waterways development?
- Which waterside locations should be protected/ are not suitable for development?
- Which waterside locations are suitable for development/ provision of facilities?
- What should be the main project priorities for waterways development e.g.
 - Integration with local visitor facilities, pubs, accommodation, trails and attractions
 - Provision of waterways infrastructure – moorings, pump outs etc
 - Provision of other support infrastructure for waterways users – camp sites, showers
 - Support or investigation of potential commercial boating provision on the River Nene
 - Support for waterways businesses - boating, canoeing and kayaking, fishing

- Access to waterways and riverside – trails, parking, signage
- Ensuring low carbon principles and projects – alternative fuels for boats, sustainable transport to waterside locations, integration with ecotourism and biodiversity projects

NENE TOWNS

- What should be the vision for the Nene towns over the next 5-20 years?
- What should be the main objective(s) for the Nene Towns in this strategy?
- How can the Nene Towns be more strongly orientated to the river?
 - How can they recognise the Nene as part of their image/ branding?
 - Can the development/ physical orientation of the towns incorporate the river more strongly?
 - Can access to the Nene be better promoted?
- How can the towns be developed to provide better facilities for visitors, e.g. cafes, attractions, refreshment/accommodation stops for those visiting the Nene Valley? How should this investment be encouraged?
- Are there particular opportunities for certain towns to have themed recreational or visitor development e.g. based on their heritage, river proximity, food production, a prominent development site, distance or proximity to other towns, relationship with surrounding countryside, landscape setting? Which towns could focus on which themes?

PROTECTED AND WORKING COUNTRYSIDE

- What should be the vision for the Nene countryside over the next 5-20 years?
- What should be the main objective(s) to ensure a protected and working countryside in the Nene Valley?
- How should environmental stewardship, land use management and strengthening biodiversity be promoted and delivered by the strategy? How should we create a modern, sustainable, working countryside? How does this relate to tourism and recreation?
 - Are there particular opportunities for ecotourism and for craft and food related tourism?
 - Are there particular opportunities for carbon sequestration?
- How should visitor numbers be managed at particular honeypot locations if these are near environmentally sensitive locations? Should the strategy identify principles to moderate/ restrict access e.g. by limiting car parking and footpath widths or charging for access? How should access to the pSPA area be managed?

CONNECTIVITY

- What should a more accessible and better connected Nene Valley look like over the next 5-20 years, particularly in conjunction with the growth towns?
- What should be the main objective(s) for improving access and connectivity in the Nene Valley?
- What sorts of projects can improve connectedness and accessibility within the Nene Valley? E.g.
 - Promotion, branding and signposting of attractions and access points
 - Better public transport access points into the Nene Valley – from Wellingborough, Northampton and Peterborough – integrated with recreational paths (cycling and walking) in the Nene Valley
 - Integrated tourism and visitor packages to several attractions in reasonable proximity to one another

- Development of a new Nene Valley Way recreational trail for cycling and walking stretching the length of the Nene Valley between Northampton and Peterborough
- Ensuring road and car parking provision is integrated with recreational trail provision in the Nene Valley
- Ensuring all the above provides better access to the waterside
- Provision of water-based transport e.g. a river bus/ tourist boat
- Can the above be prioritised?

TOURISM AND VISITOR DEVELOPMENT

- What should a more appealing Nene tourist and visitor destination look like over the next 5-20 years?
- What should be the main objective(s) for developing tourism and visitor facilities in the Nene Valley?
- Can particular priorities for tourism/ visitor development be identified? What should these include? E.g.
 - Visitor facilities and managed access to wildlife and countryside areas
 - Arts, culture and heritage related tourism. What themes or proposals should be considered e.g. American/ Washington heritage connection, waterways heritage (mills, locks, associated industrial heritage), Chester Farm, spires and squires, WWII airfields?
 - Identification of scenic locations and areas which should be promoted for public access. This might include prioritisation of access/ promotion of particular sites (nature reserves, woodlands)
 - Improvements to accommodation and eateries – B&Bs, self-catering, hotels (large and boutique), hostels, restaurants, pubs, cafes. Waterside or nature based locations to be a priority.
 - Food related tourism
 - Packaged visitor and recreational experiences e.g. canoe/ cycle based visits

ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE

- What should be the vision for creating more recreation opportunities in the Nene Valley over the next 5-20 years?
- What should be the overall objective(s) for developing recreation and activities in the Nene Valley?
- Can particular priorities for recreational development be identified? What should these include? E.g.
 - Waterways recreation – boating, canoeing and kayaking, fishing
 - New marinas and moorings to increase boating activity and associated visitor facilities/ waterside development
 - Recreational trail development (for walking and cycling) to facilitate access and enjoyment of the Nene Valley and surrounding countryside
 - Other types of recreation/ activities
 - The importance of promoting and encouraging passive recreation (not specifically as-recreation or an activity) e.g. by integrating local walking and cycle access with local recreational trails or access to facilities
- Should a new Nene Valley Way recreational trail for cycling and walking stretching the length of the Nene Valley between Northampton and Peterborough be developed?

STRATEGY VISION

- What should the overall vision for the strategy seek to include?
- What would stakeholders like to see happen in the Nene Valley? How ambitious can RNRP and its partners be?
- How can this be delivered? Are there opportunities for significant private sector funding, particularly given the growth in North Northamptonshire (both residents and employment)
- What should the timescale for the strategy be – 5 years, 10 years?

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

- What are the objectives from each of the themes above? Do these objectives integrate with one another? Do they overlap?
- Are additional overarching objectives needed to ensure a comprehensive strategy? These could relate to
 - Sustainability, low carbon, energy and waste efficiency principles
 - local planning policy
 - the role and remit of RNRP and its stakeholders
 - economic benefit and social well-being (including health, educational, cultural and wider community benefits)

GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES

- When the Nene Valley is considered as a whole and in conjunction with the wider North Northamptonshire area, can particular geographical priorities be identified (cogniscent of planning policy) e.g.
 - Access nodes
 - Areas appropriate for more intensive investment in visitor facilities
 - Areas for more restricted investment/ development i.e. stronger protection
- Should particular proposals or principles be developed for different part of the Nene Valley recognising the character and opportunities? E.g. Upper Nene, Lower Nene, Growth Towns
- Are there particular sites for tourism/ recreational development should be identified in the strategy and if so which? E.g. the site at Nine Arches Bridge at Thrapston.

BACKGROUND TO NENE VALLEY STRATEGY

The Strategy Development Workshop in April 2008 follows the stakeholder workshop held in November 2007 which explored issues, proposals and opportunities. In the meantime, work is commencing on the Upper Nene proposed Special Protection Area, the EU designated environmentally protected area. Once complete this work will inform preparation of the Nene Valley Strategy.

Two previous papers have helped inform stakeholder input to the strategy:

- Nene Valley Strategy November 2007 Workshops Paper
- Nene Valley Strategy Summary of November 2007 Workshops

If you would like copies of the above documents, please contact River Nene Regional Park on 01604 237648 or RNRP@northamptonshire.gov.uk